



Nothing Says "Summer" Like Fresh Maine Produce

Tomatoes still warm from the sun, strawberries and blueberries meltingly sweet.

At the same time, consumers need to remember that germs can be everywhere--even on our summertime vegetables and fruits.

Whether they're grown in another country or our own back yard, our fruits and vegetables can harbor these germs. They can become contaminated by the soil they're grown in or water used for irrigation or rinsing.

Key tips to remember to reduce the risk of illness:

- **The fresher the better:** Avoid buying produce with wilted, moldy or slimy parts where bacteria can multiply. Only buy what you need. According to the Produce Marketing Association, most items should be used within a few days.
- **Clean, clean, clean:** Just before you use it, wash it all--fruits and vegetables. This includes fruits with rinds or skin. Don't use detergent or bleach--it could be absorbed through the skin.
- **Keep the other germs away!** Don't let fresh fruit or vegetables come in contact with raw meat, poultry, or seafood. This also means making sure that you thoroughly wash any plates or knives that might have touched raw meat before you use them with produce.
- **Refrigerate** cut-up fruit immediately.



The Interdepartmental Food Safety Group consists of the:
Department of Agriculture, Department of Infectious Disease, Department of Environmental Health,
Department of Marine Resources, Department of Education, University of Maine Cooperative
Extension, Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.